




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 19 April 2023

MOTION: YOUTH CRIME

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (5.08 pm): I rise to speak against the motion moved by the member for Traeger and to advise that the government will be voting against the motion. Our government does not support relocation sentencing. Moving young people to remote locations is not a safe, effective or efficient solution to youth crime. There is very strong evidence that explains why young people offend and very clear connections between childhood trauma and offending behaviour. Many of the young people have been victims of crime themselves and have grown up experiencing family violence, have a parent who has been incarcerated and have had inconsistent schooling. When this is mixed with drug and alcohol misuse and untreated mental health issues, it drives youth offending.

Relocation sentencing takes young people away from their community and does not help them develop strategies that will stop them offending when they come back to their real life. It removes young people's access to the health, education, training and support services needed to address the root causes of their offending and break the cycle of reoffending. Young people who are a risk to community safety and are remanded or sentenced to custody should be held in safe and secure environments. Youth detention centres provide young people with the services I just spoke about in-house and also have access to the broader service systems available in Brisbane and Townsville which cannot be replicated in remote areas. Relocation sentencing would not provide any benefits that are not already available and may put community at risk.

A secure facility would be needed for relocation sentencing to ensure community safety expectations are met. If a secure environment is not provided then there is the risk of a repeat of the 2013 incident when two teenagers escaped from a boot camp in Kuranda, broke into a home and threatened a woman with a knife. That is not a risk that I believe the community would be willing to take.

The Katter's Australian Party has suggested that electronic monitoring makes a secure environment unnecessary. Relying on electronic monitoring in very remote locations where coverage may not be guaranteed is a significant issue. The Katter party's relocation sentencing proposal lacks detail but appears to be very similar to the former LNP government's sentenced youth boot camp program. In 2015, an independent evaluation found the boot camp program failed its core purpose, which was to reduce repeat offending. Of the 74 young people in the sentenced youth boot camp program, 63.5 per cent reoffended by the time the evaluation was published, which is no different to other forms of detention. The ultimate cost of the trial was \$16.7 million, more than eight times the initial estimated cost.

In contrast, on-country programs take young people onto country for shorter periods as part of a broader program that links them to their culture, community and family, and builds networks and supports that will last beyond the program. Our government has committed more than \$5 million over four years to pilot the program in Cairns, Mount Isa and Townsville. The program focuses on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders aged 10 to 17 years who are repeat offenders with high and complex

needs. The government is a strong supporter of on-country programs that form part of our comprehensive suite of measures to address youth crime. We want to invest in evidence-based programs that will actually make a difference. This proposal is not one of them.

We will invest in programs such as intensive case management. We are investing an additional \$30 million as part of the recently announced \$100 million funding boost into intensive case management that has delivered a 51 per cent reduction in the frequency of offending. Intensive case management provides targeted intervention to address multiple factors that impact juvenile offending, including substance abuse. It aims to enhance family and kinship connections and promote engagement in education and training. I think it was this program that the member was referring to, which I briefed him on recently, when he said he feels it is not effective enough. However, it is about people going, with cultural authority, when required, to people's gates to offer the support that is needed. There has been a 51 per cent reduction in the frequency of offending and an over 70 per cent reduction in the severity of offending. That is evidence based.

While the government is voting against this motion, I acknowledge that Katter's Australian Party at least has a policy regarding youth justice. The same cannot be said for the LNP. Our government will continue to listen to the community when it comes to youth crime and we will continue to invest in evidence based—

(Time expired)